Appleyard College- Look At Me

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Although it may have come out in 2006, Appleyard College's debut full length Look At Me doesn't appear to have generated much discussion among American audiences. The solo project of Italy's Luigi Porto, Appleyard College is a mixture of electronic, drone, chamber folk, and traditional folk. And while some of the mixtures of sound and complexities of the compositions may make this a release that will take quite a few listens to fully absorb, those who take the time to listen to it will really appreciate what Porto has to offer.

What I find immediately appealing about Look At Me is the variety of instrumental styles it brings in to play. While Luigi Porto has taken quite a bit of influence from some of his fellow European singer/songwriters, some of the melodies and guitar compositions sound as though they could have been written by any of the contemporary American folk singer/songwriters. This combination of American and European styles creates a sound that is unique, even among the thousands of artists who come from these areas. Appleyard College is also interesting due to the fact that it intersperses bits of electronics and strings in with traditional arrangements. A song might appear to be following a traditional and rigid pattern and then suddenly that will change and offer something different for a quick moment before returning to its original style. The overall style of this album is somewhat darker than one might expect from music of this type but that arguably makes it all the more interesting and even more complex.

Quite a few of the tracks on Look At Me are instrumental only, but many of the tracks towards the beginning of the album find Luigi Porto providing vocals. His voice is very mellow and at times he almost sounds as though he is whispering, which fits in well with the darker and more down-tempo instrumental arrangements. Porto sings entirely in English on this release and he has a noticeable accent which gives his voice a different sound than some of the other singers out there. Porto also includes some sound clips on a few of the tracks from what appears to be an old movie, and these have been seamlessly integrated into the music.

Anyone with a taste for more experimental music owes it to themselves to give Appleyard College's debut a chance. Look At Me is not only a mixture of American and European musical styles, but also a mixture of the electronic and the acoustic. There is a lot to take in, so it may be hard to say whether fans of traditional folk music or not will be able to appreciate this release, but listeners who give this album a chance will find that they will discover something new each time they listen to it. Luigi Porto should certainly be commended, for he has created music that explores familiar styles while pushing into entirely new territory.

http://www.centreofwood.com/cold_current/coldcurrent.htm
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